



Louis Hémon

The novel *Maria Chapdelaine* portrays life in rural Quebec at the beginning of the 20th century. Published first in French in 1913, it is a famous example of the genre known as "novels of the land" ("romans du terroir"). These stories sought to reinforce and preserve the cultural, linguistic, and religious heritage of French Canada — a heritage at risk because of French Canada's historical situation as a conquered enclave inside English North America. Maria is a young woman whose family works the farm they have cleared from the harsh Quebec forest — "a land that has no pity." As young men seek her hand in marriage, she must clarify her own identity, struggling not only with the problem of selecting from among her suitors, but also with her relationship to the land and to her heritage. The author Louis Hémon had immigrated from France just two years before writing this novel, and worked on a farm in the Lac Saint-Jean region where the story is set. Hémon died accidentally before seeing his novel in print. (Summary by Bruce Pirie)

Maria Chapdelaine

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Read by Bruce Pirie. Total running time: 5:19:29

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